**CENTRE FOR THE ARTS IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**
**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY**

**NEWSLETTER -- JANUARY 1997**

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Dear Readers,

This is the first newsletter from the Centre for the Arts in Human Development at Concordia University. We at the Centre would like to share with all the partners involved in this special project -- participants, family members, educators, staff, students, faculty of Concordia University, and benefactors of our project -- the goals of our Centre and a "progress report" after the first semester has passed. You will be able to hear from the Professors involved in the Centre, the specialists, students and volunteers, about what their work has been comprised of for the first few months... For our next issue in May, 1997, we'd like to include messages from the participants themselves, parents, educators, and supporters. We look forward to everyone's participation in this newsletter.

Lenore Vosberg, M.S.W.
Editor

Michelle Tracy
Co-Editor

## REPORT FROM THE CLINICAL COORDINATOR

Over the Summer of 1996, we began to accept applications from the various vocational services that deal with people with disabilities -- West Island Readaptation Centre (our major partner in this project), Miriam Home, Le Cap, and La Spirale. Applicants were interviewed by Dr. Stephen Snow, Director of the Centre and Lenore Vosberg, Clinical Coordinator. Applicants (with parents or educators) were able to articulate their personal goals for what they hoped to accomplish over the course of the next two years, through their participation in several of the creative arts therapies -- art, music, dance-movement, and drama.

Twenty-one participants were accepted into the programme, and we began our two-day-per-week sessions on October 7, 1996.

Overall I have observed that the participants have been feeling very positive about attending the Centre and have been supported to express themselves in whatever ways they feel comfortable. We have been very fortunate to have highly skilled professionals running each of the creative arts therapies -- Drama is run by Dr. Stephen Snow, Registered Drama Therapist, Art Therapy is headed by three fine arts faculty -- Leland Peterson, Denise Tanguay and Elizabeth Anthony, and groups are led by three graduate students in art therapy. Music is run by Shelley Snow, Certified Music Therapist, and dance-movement is run by Joanabbey Sack, Registered Dance Therapist. Research is headed by Dr. Miranda D'Amico, Coordinator of Educational Psychology at Concordia. We have established ourselves as an interdisciplinary project, and plan to expand this project with further partnerships within the University and with other organizations in the community dealing with special populations, as the Centre grows.

## COMMUNICATION

Our project has been featured in Concordia's Thursday Report, issue of November 7, 1996.

Dr. Miranda D'Amico made a presentation on our research study on school children's attitude change at the American Educational Research Association in April, 1996.

Dr. Stephen Snow made a presentation at the joint conference of the American Association of Dance Therapists and the National Association for Drama Therapy in Santa Monica, California in October, 1996.

Lenore Vosberg, Miranda D'Amico and Anna Barrafato, graduation student, made a presentation at the Colloque in Quebec City of the "Fédération québécoise des centre de réadaptation pour les personnes présantant une déficience intellectuelle" on the theme of "partnership".

Lenore Vosberg, MSW
Clinical Coordinator

## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

The **Centre for the Arts in Human Development** is alive and well, singing, dancing, drawing, painting and playing an important role in the life of the community and the university. What only a year ago was a vision, growing out of the Aladdin Project, is now a reality! Many people have worked hard to make this dream come true. The programme itself is a collaborative initiatve, jointly sponsored by Graduate Art Therapy, and the Education and Theatre Departments at Concordia University, with special start-up funding, for two years, from a Seagram's Grant for Academic Innovation. Since the Fall, our headquaters have been located at 7079 Terrebonne, just a block east of the Loyola Campus of Concordia University. On Mondays and Fridays, our 21 clients arrive at 9:30 am to begin their day-long programme of sessions in the Creative Arts Therapies.

The mission of the Centre is to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Creative Arts Therapies in enhancing the well-being, developing the whole personality and promoting the social integration of our participants. We are fortunate to have a staff of exceptionally gifted Creative Arts Therapists. Our support team is also dedicated and talented, including our Clinical Coordinator Lenore Vosberg and Logistical Coordinator Lynne Madgett and many graduate and undergraduate interns and volunteers.

During the Winter Term, the Centre is continuing to operate on Mondays and Fridays, providing six Art Therapy sessions, one Dance Therapy session and one Music Therapy Session, and one large Developmental Drama Workshop in which our 21 participants are paired with 21 Concordia University students. We hope to conclude our first year of programming with a large-scale Public Event, including a Theatre Production and an Art Exhibit at the same location, probably in June. Plans for this project are being finalized and will be announced by Spring.

## NOTES ON THE DRAMA PROGRAMME

The focus of the Drama Programme at the Centre has been on developing the participants' expressive and communicative skills, along with deepening concentration and widening attention spans. We have been applying and adapting the methods of Developmental Drama to the special needs of the participants. Often, this is approached in a very creative way, including engaging the participants in role-playing within brief improvisations in which they create both the sound effects and the characters. Another goal of the Drama component at the Centre is to promote the participants' autonomy, constantly enhancing the individual's ability to express themselves in their own unique way, with more freedom of expression and less and less prompting from staff and volunteers. The aim is for indiviuals to find more pleasure and excitement in their own authentic experience of the Creative Arts involved in Drama (movement, vocalizing, singing, mime, storymaking, roleplay, etc.).

During the Fall Term, the Monday session was co-lead with the Dance Therapist and the Friday session, with the Music Therapist. This multimodal approach was quite challenging, mostly because of the size of the group. Two undergraduate interns from the Drama in Education Programme, Frances Patterson and Karen Levy, assisted with these groups. Now, in the Winter Term, each modality has its own separate group, however the Drama session is run as a Developmental Drama Workshop in which 21 Concordia University students (taking the "Drama Experiences for Special Populations" course) participate. We are hoping, out of this three-month process, to slowly and sensitively evolve the basis for another theatre production like OH! THAT ALADDIN... Now, only time ( and having some faith in the Developmental Drama process ) will tell...

Stephen Snow, Ph.D., RDT

## REPORT FROM THE ART THERAPY COORDINATOR

We are into our 2nd semester of programming already. Three art therapy groups have been established, conducted by art therapy programme graduate students. Ron Lay, Heidi Smith and Stephen Scott lead art therapy groups every Monday and Friday mornings. Volunteers assist in each group, and they include Anne Côté, Deborah Guttman-Groper, Francine Quintin, Anne Benoit, and Valerie Neufeld. The interns and volunteers are working on using visual art as a way of encouraging each group member to develop expressive visual skills, that include painting, drawing and sculpture. Participants in each group are encouraged to talk about and reflect on their work.

Art Therapy works to develop self-esteem because it actively engages the person in bringing a thought, feeling, fantasy or wish to concrete reality, and in sharing it with others. It allows the participant to become actively involved in creating a visual dialogue with others.

Different media evoke different experiences. For example, watercolours can stimulate emotions; the experience of working with fluid paint can be soothing, while bright colour can also express vibrancy. These experiences can be shared and create a sense of commonality and connection to others.

The graduate students are closely supervised by faculty from the art therapy programme. The faculty

include: Elizabeth Anthony, M.A., M.A.A.T., on-site art therapy supervisor, Denise Tanguay, M.A., ATR, Faculty Supervisor, and myself. We are fortunate to have the services of Elizabeth and Denise. Elizabeth teaches the advanced research course in the programme, and Denise, who in addition to full-time teaching responsibilities at the University, was responsible for the large donation of equipment, furniture and supplies to the Centre.

**Acknowledgements:**

We would also like to acknowledge the many people in the University who have helped start the programme and continue to contribute to its success. Thank you to Rector Frederick Lowy and Vice-Rector Jack Lightstone and former Vice-Rector Charles Bertrand for their support, to Christopher Jackson, Dean of Fine Arts who has been extremely supportive and instrumental in establishing the Centre, to Associate Deans Kathleen Perry and Gene Gibbons: Gene has helped us tremendously in organizing our space at the University and in planning for the future. Kathleen has offered much good advice and assistance in fundraising and in obtaining our phone. Thank you to David Brown, Director of Capital Gifts, who reviewed our proposal and offered advice on fundraising, to Lucy Wong, in the Treasury Office, who helps us with our treasury account, and to Heather Endre, who has provided advice and assistance with our Seagram Grant. Thank you to Gaston Boulanger in Distribution Services who, on short notice coordinated the moving of all of our furniture and supplies, to Christine Nadeau-Morel, administrative assistant in the Art Therapy Programme, who has assisted in many invaluable ways, and to Beverly Monk, research assistant for the Art Therapy Programme. Thank you to Director of Facilities Planning, Ronald Proulx and Christine Lavoie, space planning officer for their patient help in organizing space for the Centre, and in considering our future needs, and to Richard Guy from the Centre for Building Studies for his sound advice. Sincere thanks to Gerry Gross, Acting Chair, Eric Mongerson, Chair, Joanne Rankin, Assistant to the Chair, and Faculty and Staff of the Theatre Department for their support and encouragement.

Leland Peterson, M.A., ATR

**our Christmas Party on December 13, 1996**

## RESEARCH IN THE WORKS

The Creative Arts are being used in our Centre as a powerful tool for human development and increasingly are being used to promote self-esteem and integration. The therapeutic arts programmes have been developed to promote the highest degree of social integration of the participants. Preliminary research has evaluated the effectiveness of the creative arts in improving people's overall well-being and sense of accomplishment.

One of the long-term research goals of the Centre is to develop evaluation tools for individuals with behavioural or intellectual challenges. We are currently conducting extensive and thorough observations through the use of video and written observation of the participants in the various arts programmes. As a result of these observations, we want to develop a detailed analysis of the participants' development and

growth as they go through the therapeutic process. Behavioural observation is the beginning; this procedure will help develop a spectrum of both formal and informal observation and measurement tools.

Miranda D'Amico, Ph.D.
Research Coordinator

**REPORT FROM THE DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPIST**

Dance Movement Therapy was integrated into the Centre's programming last October. Movement groups were introduced in combination with developmental drama classes and the entire group began to explore movement in an atmosphere of growing trust and creativity. Each session included the use of physical gestures as expressive tools, a complete physical warm up, and the linking of movement qualities to themes and experiences in drama.

Since January, a group of ten participants meets weekly for dance movement therapy where we continue to use movement to build confidence as well as strength, self-esteem and mobility. Approaches to relaxation are a major part of each session as we build on the experience of active and passive relaxation. Each week, group members contribute ideas about waht they most enjoy and "what works" as we explore, learn and laugh in the Centre's coming year.

Joanabbey Sack, M.A., ADTR

**REPORT FROM THE MUSIC THERAPIST**

At the Centre, Music Therapy is employed with the following goals in mind: to improve the quality of life for clients through an enhancement in self-esteem, in awareness of others and in the ability to relate to others' in meaningful, satisfying ways.

Creative self-expression creates opportunities for learning new skills, for experiencing positive, successful and pleasurable social experiences and for developing awareness of self, others and the envirnoment in ways that improve functioning on all levels, enhance well-being and foster independent living.

Shelley Snow, M.A.,CMT

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

After the success of the "Oh! That Aladdin" musical a total of $38,000 was raised through the Taylor-Birks Foundation. After the two productions in 1994 and 1995, a Quality of Life Fund was set up at Les Promotions Sociales Taylor-Thibodeau, and about $4,000 of the funds raised by the Aladdin Project were kept aside for our future "Centre", which was at the "proposal" stage at Concordia. When we got the news in March, 1996, that the Seagram Fund for Academic Innovation had accepted our project for a two-year $60,000 grant, we had the official impetus to begin our concrete plans for the Centre. Though by the time we were to begin we had not nearly the funds required in our proposed budget, we decided to proceed and develop the program according to the means available. It was a "now or never" situation, and we proceeded.

We were very fortuante to have received a very generous personal donation from Mr. Alexander Dworkin who was impressed with our plan and sensitive approach within the Centre. The Gustav Levinschi Foundation donated a most welcome and generous amount which has helped us hire our specialists for the rest of the year. Others who have, to date, contributed financially, and to whom we are most grateful, are: The C.B. Powell Foundation, The F.K. Morrow Foundation, Sybil Feis, Millie Ostroff, Manny Shacter, Av Morrow, Marjorie Rishikof, Marilyn Takefman,and Noreen Trenner, Dorothy Dorsey, Mr.and Mrs. Jack Engels, Clarke Madgett, Mr.and Mrs. Stephen Dorsey, and the Royal Bank of Canada.

Seeking financial support for this important work is an ongoing endeavour. We have been successful thus far in procuring the minimum amount of funds needed for this academic year. We need everyone's support and ideas on fundraising so that the Centre will have a long-range future. We have the skills, the energy, the need; all we need is the money to make it happen!

We have created a Fundraising Committee composed of parents, foster caregivers and volunteers. We are planning to organize a music and dance concert on March 14th that will hopefully bring in at least $4,000. This benefit concert will feature the "Generations Jazz Band", our own Shelley Snow, and the "Special Blend" dance duo. We will be selling tickets for door prizes, and a special grand prize of the art work of professional artist, Myrna Brooks Bercovitch, from our parent community. For tickets, please call: Irene Robillard at 761-5571, local 265. We hope to see everyone at our musical production and art exhibit

in June '97.

Lenore Vosberg, MSW
Fundraising Coordinator

**REPORT FROM THE LOGISTICS COORDINATOR**

As "Logistics Coordinator" of the Centre I deal with all the in-between-session activities with the participants, i.e. break times, lunch, transportation, problem-solving etc. We are very pleased about the successful social integration of our participants with Concordia students and staff. Our lunch hours are relaxed and enjoyable thanks to the helpfulness of Dorothy and Julie (staff in the Hingston Hall cafeteria) and student volunteers. Dorothy made the end of our first semester special for us all by making a Christmas/Hannukah party. She dressed up as Santa Claus and gave each of the participants their own snacks and gifts.

Our Christmas party (staff and students) on December 13th was also enjoyed by all and we parted for the holidays satisfied that our first semester was rewarding for everyone.

Lynne Madgett, T.A.S.

**REPORT FROM THE ART THERAPY ON-SITE SUPERVISOR**

In my capacity as art therapy on-site supervisor, in the first term I have been priviledged to help interns explore ways to facilitate change in their art therapy groups. It has been rewarding to see groups of individuals with an understandably somewhat apprehensive involvement with art media and with their new milieu grow into groups of persons creatively involved in self-expression, learning ways to respond to each other's art work and art process, as well as contributing to group murals. The expansion of participants' repertoires of creative expression began with very simple, but utterly crucial, validation of each person's current abilities with art media. From there, interns have proceeded to support the development of competencies with art media, as each person is able, so that participants can engage in expressive art experiences and create images that hold personal meaning, enhance their verbal and nonverbal communication skills, and in this way contribute to self-esteem. The art therapy wolunteers have also been essential in supporting participants in their image-making process. Each person, in his or her own way, has become an important part of this creative community.

Elizabeth Anthony

**REPORTS FROM THE INTERNS AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**

As an art therapist intern, I have been leading group sessions twice a week. These sessions have given to the participants a space in which they develop a sense of interpersonal relationships. In addition, the group engages in the image-making process whilst feeling comfortable participating in the sharing aspects of the session, which focuses on the expression of thoughts and feelings. It has been a wonderful experience to observe the participants' growth and development at this Centre.

Heidi Smith
Art Therapy Intern

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The first semester at the Centre was indeed full of challenges, opportunities and experiences. A personal thrill was employing a viable experience for individuals in a non-threatening arena for personal expression and growth. I have had the opportunity to witness the effects that a multi-disciplinary approach has on our participants. Participants have come together to work on their own goals and also on group goals. I am honoured to have the opportunity to stimulate and encourage development and growht through group and individual art therapy. The Centre is young but its future holds many exciting possibilities.

Ron Lay
Art Therapy Intern

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I feel the programming at the centre is developing nicely, and that staff and volunteers are sensitive to making appropriate adjustments in order to fulfill individual participants', as well as group needs. An

integrative vision is forming which considers the foles played by the various disciplines in an expressive therapies program, and which takes into account long-term goals.

In my Art Therapy Group, for reasons of flexibility and good assistance, this semester promises to be one in which there is the possibility of providing a programme in which the participants can engage in a therapeutic way with art-making processes, on many levels. I hope to be able to provide an active and supportive environment which will ficilitate and enhance creative thinking, and help the participants see and value their own production.

Stephen Scott
Art Therapy Intern

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I am a graduate student in Education at Concordia University and am presently working as a research assistant for Dr. Miranda D'Amico. As such, I am doing observations of the music and movement therapies.

The most evident change I have noticed in the clients is their ability to trust and interact comfortably with the therapists, interns, students and staff. I look forward to seeing more positive changes as the therpeutic process continues.

Anna Barrafato, B.A.

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I am grateful to have been given the opportunity of working with the staff, students, volunteers and participants of the Centre. It is a place of big hearts and sparkle. I assist with the developmental drama group, do the wordprocessing, and will be doing a special research project involving the specific condition of one of the participants. I have been greatly encouraged in pursuing my interest in drama therapy as a result of being able to see concrete results of the uses of drama in improving such things as self-esteem. I have seen the shyest participants slip out of their shells in moments where the drama activities catch them off guard and they find themselves engaging and having fun in spite of themselves. I hope to continue having the opportunity to offer drama as a helpful tool to people.

Michelle Tracy, Administrative/Research Assistant

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This is my third consecutive semester working with the staff and participants from the Centre. I am a third year Drama in Education student focusing on drama thearpy under the guidance of Stephen Snow. Working at the Centre has given me an opportunity to lead workshops, to carefully observe the growth and participation of the participants, to research pertinent information in order to be as helpful and understanding as possible, and to focus on the individual performance of one participants in particular. In the immediate future I plan to continue my work at the Centre by doing a full case study and research project on a participant during the acting sessions. I find this work challenging, interesting and motivating, and I plan on continuing my work and gaining experience in creative arts therapies as methods of rehabilitation and healing.

Karen Levy
Developmental Drama Intern

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My experience as a volunteer at the Centre has been meaningful and very enjoyable. I am learning a great deal from the participants. As I meet each of these men and women where they are at, I am also learning to demonstrate this same sensitivity towards myself and the challenges I face. Most of the adults I'm involved with have been very patient with me as I discover things they already know well. In return, I have attempted to enliven their learning with the joy and healing nature of theatre, music and dance. And I must say, they have taken to it with zest, each in his or her own particular way, creating the sounds and images of horse-drawn carriages and howling storms, and improvising a championship football game. It has been fun, and I look forward to spending time with this group in the coming year.

Wade Maybie